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NIC #644-85
4 March 1985

NOTE TO: NIO/SP
NIO/GPF

FROM : Chairman, NIC

SUBJECT: Annual Production Report

1. The National Foreign Intelligence Board last week approved my proposal for an annual interagency paper on Soviet weapons production. We need now to organize to complete such a paper. (S)

2. My view is that the paper should focus on major strategic and conventional weapon systems. It should be ready for publication not later than 15 December each year. The document should accomplish the following:

- Present the most recent year production estimates for the included weapon systems. An appropriate cutoff date will have to be chosen. For example, if the document is to be coordinated and ready for publication by mid December, it may be necessary for us to deal with production from July to July or the latest possible cutoff that still gives us sufficient data to make an estimate.
- It should also reflect cumulative stocks, perhaps using as a baseline 1975.
- It should have sufficient blue data to allow us to express Soviet production as a percentage of US production in both current year and historical trends.
- I see the document as an IIM and one that would make good use of graphics. (S)

3. I urge the two of you to meet as soon as possible with a view to organizing the production of this estimate including the creation of working groups, appointment of an overall chairman and so forth. It will be an effort primarily involving DIA and CIA, although the services will presumably have something to

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contribute. One of the objectives of the effort will be to identify where there are differences on production estimates and where there are, to explain why. (For example, apparently the differences on ICBM and SLBM production derive from a different view of refires, where we have little or no evidence but a lot of theology; on the other hand, the differences on number of surface combatants produced appear to be due primarily to definitional problems. I would expect this effort to resolve those definitional problems so that for such systems we can have agreed numbers. Similarly, differences in the number of tanks, interceptors and so forth seem to me either resolvable or explainable and this document should do that.) (S)

4. This document should not deal with capability but only with production; 11-3/8 and 11-14 and the other estimates will continue to focus on capability. (S)

5. Please let me know your plan for tackling this undertaking by 22 March. Feel free to consult as necessary with other elements of the Community. (S)


Robert M. Gates

cc: VC/NIC

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